STWE REVIEW

JANUARY 1958

Volume 5 Number 1

GROWTH OF THE TECHNICAL WRITING PROFESSION
by Robert R. Rathbone 5

HOW TO BE A PURIST
by Frederick T. VanVeen 7

NOTES ON PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS RELATING TO TECHNICAL SUBJECTS
by Tracy W. Simpson 9

A TIMETABLE FOR REPORT WRITING
by Warren B. Bezanson 14

published by the
SOCIETY OF TECHNICAL WRITERS AND EDITORS

OFFICERS OF THE

SOCIETY OF TECHNICAL WRITERS AND EDITORS

PRESIDENT

Irving H. Jenks
Aluminum Laboratories, Ltd.
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

VICE-PRESIDENT

Thomas A. Grogan
McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.
New York, New York

SECRETARY

Frances L. Weeden
Society of Automotive Engineers

TREASURER

Paul S. Kennedy
Battelle Memorial Institute

EDITORIAL BOARD

W. Earl Britton
University of Michigan

H. C. McDaniel
Westinghouse Electric

Anne L. Gregory
General Electric

Robert A. Sencer
Rensselear Polytechnic Institute

MEMO TO MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS: In the preceding years the Society of Technical Writers published a journal called TECHNICAL WRITING REVIEW, and the Association of Technical Writers and Editors published the TWE JOURNAL. These two organizations are now merged as the Society of Technical Writers and Editors. In October 1956 THE TECHNICAL WRITER was first published as a joint editorial effort of the two journals' staffs. The STWE REVIEW now makes its appearance as the only journal of the merged societies.

Copyright—1958 STWE

STWE REVIEW

JANUARY 1958
VOL. 5 NO. 1 JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF TECHNICAL WRITERS AND EDITORS

EDITOR
Allan H. Lytel
General Electric Company

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Richard A. Hanousek
General Electric Company

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
Thomas A. Grogan
McGraw-Hill Publishing Company

ADVERTISING
Ken Tong
High Voltage Engineering
Burlington, Massachusetts

EDITORIAL OFFICE
General Electric Company
Electronics Laboratory
Building 3-244
Electronics Park
Syracuse, New York

PRODUCED BY:
Ewing Technical Design, Inc.
1913 Arch Street
Philadelphia 3, Penna.

GROWTH OF THE TECHNICAL WRITING PROFESSION by Robert R. Rathbone 5
How technical writing as a profession has grown since World War II

HOW TO BE A PURIST by Frederick T. VanVeen 7
Some aspects of a grammatical purist

NOTES ON PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS RELATING TO TECHNICAL SUBJECTS by Tracy W. Simpson 9
A trend toward the uniformity of style

A TIMETABLE FOR REPORT WRITING by Warren B. Bezanson 14
A method for writing reports almost simultaneously with the research work

BOOKS 19
CONTRIBUTORS 24
EDITORIAL 4
LETTERS 3
NEWS AND VIEWS 12-13

STWE REVIEW is published quarterly (January, April, July and October) by the Society of Technical Writers and Editors. Single copies may be had for $1.00 each. Subscriptions are $4.00 per year. Inquiries about subscriptions should be addressed to: Thomas R. O'Neill, 216 President Street, Passaic, New Jersey.

ROYER and ROGER, Inc. continues to offer to Government and Industry a source of reliable technical writing, illustrating and production services... Based on 25 years of experience in the technical publications field.

Providing a professional staff to augment industrial publications groups, ROYER AND ROGER, INC. through quality performance has established its position as the leader in the technical publications industry.

TODAY, with a staff of over 1000 trained personnel... engineers, writers, technicians, illustrators, catalogers ... ROYER AND ROGER, INC. provides positive personnel selection for every assignment... large and small.

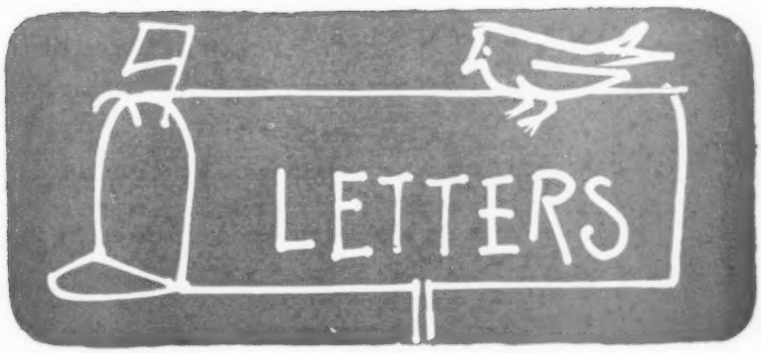
25th Anniversary

Specific information may be obtained by directing inquiries to...

ROYER and ROGER, Inc.

130 EAST 59TH STREET, NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

NEW YORK • ST. LOUIS • COLUMBUS



November 26, 1957

Dear Mr. Lytel:

The office listed below is interested in knowing whether the Society of Technical Writers and the Association of Technical Writers and Editors will continue to publish the TECHNICAL WRITING REVIEW and TWE JOURNAL, respectively in 1958.

Also, please advise whether there will be a new journal published by the joint effort of the two organizations.

We would appreciate price quotations for whatever journals will be available.

Sincerely yours,
Carolyn J. Kruse
Acting Head, Library Division
Commander (Code 753)
U. S. Naval Ordnance Test Section
China Lake, California

Yes. We are in business to stay; only the name keeps changing! Seriously, the STWE REVIEW will remain the STWE REVIEW. It will appear four times a year as the single journal of STWE replacing both the STW and TWE publications. (See inside cover.) Our sister publication is the STWE Newsletter which will appear in alternate months.—Ed.

November 20, 1957

Dear Mr. Lytel:

You have the unenviable job of editing a publication on how to edit publications. I hope the oppressiveness of that responsibility will never stultify your journal. On the other hand I think that a sentence such as the following from page 21 of the October issue should not appear except to serve as an example of three distinct errors of writing, all committed in a single sentence:

"In addition to the descriptive admonishments, 170 illustrations illustrate not only many successful TV commercial approaches, but also serve to show many instances of what not to do—and why."

Let me add, however, that I found the journal as a whole quite worthwhile.

Sincerely yours,
H. Gordon Dyke
Foreign Patent Operations
Radio Corporation of America
David Sarnoff Research Center
Princeton, New Jersey

That sentence is tacked on our bulletin Board. Sorry.—Ed.

September 13, 1957

Dear Mr. Lytel:

I've just written to Roger Stern, thanking him for the review of my *Physician-Writer's Book*. I have addressed the letter in care of you with the request that it be forwarded to Mr. Stern.

Here I would like to congratulate you on your Summer Issue for 1957. I'm glad to learn too that the merger of TWE and STW is likely to go through now and I wish Technical Publishing Society had come in too. My organization work has been done in the American Medical Writers' Association but I have joined everything in sight to help the profession of technical editing and writing get the recognition is deserves. My hope is that, without loss of credit to any individual, all of us may some day be members of one large, powerful, vocal organization, divided into appropriate sections.

I retire here in a few days because of the age limit but I have been invited to continue to work, 6 hours a day, 10 months a year, in the Publications Division of the Menninger Foundation, in Topeka. I expect to move to Topeka in December.

Sincerely,
Richard M. Hewitt, M.D.
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minn.

All we can say is this; we hope to see a powerful organization and we hope the REVIEW is its voice.—Ed.

November 14, 1957

Dear Mr. Lytel:

I am writing in reference to the convention issue which was certainly interesting and informative.

I feel certain that the article by Mr. Robert L. Craig, "How to Use an Outside Technical Writing Service" will be of value to many of our other readers as it was to me. I plan to keep that article and use it as a check list to avoid errors in dealing with outside writing services . . .

. . . I will be happy to prepare a prepare for your consideration discussing the technical writing program at the DoALL COMPANY.

Very truly yours,
Ted Busch
The DoAll COMPANY
Des Plaines, Illinois

We would like to see your material; the REVIEW never has too many professional articles.—Ed.

November 11, 1957

Dear Mr. Lytel:

Congratulations on the convention issue of *The Technical Writer*. I took it to a local IRE meeting, and I have never heard higher praise for a new publication. I wish I had had about fifty copies for distribution. I particularly like the cover and the articles by Craig and Keller. The whole presentation was excellent . . .

. . . Our profession seems to be ignoring one type of article which I and others need. This is an article which describes the resolution of description problems. I have been working for a year at trying to describe the movement pattern of an antenna. I have not done it satisfactorily, and I have not found anyone who has. Now, this is not really a special problem; the movement and space relationship to be described presents rather universal syntax and vocabulary problems. . . . Again I congratulate you on a really fine job. I am presently unemployed, but my former colleagues at Hughes Aircraft Company have also expressed an admiration for your production.

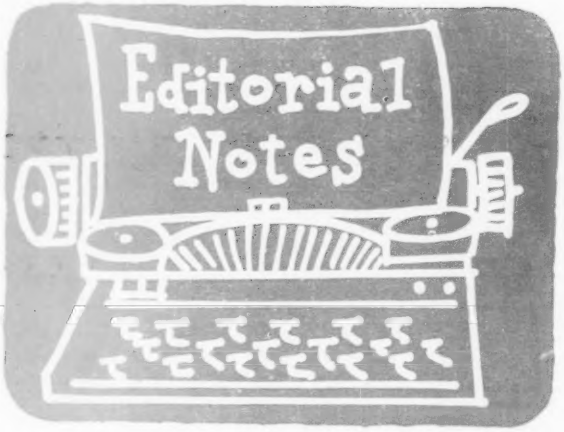
Respectfully,
W. A. Coonfield
Inglewood, California

December 11, 1957

Dear Mr. Lytel:

I only wanted to congratulate you on the excellence of the October issue of your publication, *The Technical Writer*.

(Continued on page 23)



GROWING PAINS

STWE REVIEW is the name of your new STW-TWE (STWE) professional journal. In our opinion the primary function of this journal is to promote the growth of our profession. But an editor can only edit the material which is written and submitted. Each of you must help by sending articles, suggestions, or comments.

Here you say, "He doesn't mean me. I'm too busy." But we do mean you. Perhaps a personal reference is out of place but all of us are busy. Your editor is a contributor to several journals, working on his twelfth book, editor of the Syracuse IRE Scanner, a graduate student at Syracuse University, and he has a full-time job as a Technical Editor. So you see that the editor is a charter member of the I'm-too-busy club.

STWE REVIEW needs papers on:

- Professional training programs
- Illustrating technical reports
- Standards and styles of and for publications
- Administration of technical publication groups
- Cost analysis and control
- Management views on our profession

We also need suggestions for articles, from other journals, for reprinting.

Our journal reflects our interest in our profession. Your help is needed.

ALLAN LYTEL
Editor

On the occasion of the publication of the first issue of the STWE REVIEW, the official organ of the Society of Technical Writers and Editors, those immediately concerned with its launching felt that it was desirable to make a conscious effort to explain to the members the thinking that has gone on behind the scenes.

In selecting the name STWE REVIEW, consideration was given to more descriptive titles such as The Technical Writer, The Journal of Technical Publishing, and the like. All of these, in one way or another, tend to convey a scope more limited than that set forth in our recently adopted Constitution. Since the publication is intended for all our members, what better title could there be than one that tells the reader that this is a review prepared *by* STWE *for* STWE members!

Fundamentally, it will be our policy to have each issue contain something of interest to all of our members and, at the same time, to select articles of such a character that they will be of educational value to those members who are not immediately concerned with the subject. This will be accomplished by feature articles, by articles submitted through invitation of the Editor, and by special articles on current developments. We also hope to have a section on noteworthy news items and another reporting on significant contributions by STWE members. The STWE Newsletter will be a companion publication published six times a year. It will report on chapter activities, plans of the national organization and activities of its officers and committees.

The prime objective of the STWE REVIEW will be to contribute to the *professional* advancement of technical writing and editing. We invite the members to submit professional articles for publication. While members of an organization of writers and editors should be expected to submit articles of the very highest standards, at the same time it would be a disservice to the readers to print anything that does not conform to such standards. An editorial board has been established to review all manuscripts, and though we cannot guarantee that we will print what you submit, we do assure you that each article will receive fair consideration.

We want each of you to realize that we want and need your contribtuions. To a very large extent, our success or failure will depend on you.

THOMAS A. GROGAN
Vice President and Chairman of the Publications Committee

GROWTH OF THE TECHNICAL WRITING PROFESSION

Robert R. Rathbone

. . . the art of technical writing is almost as old as science itself, the profession of technical writing has a recent beginning.

Introduction

Technical writing has a long and exciting history. Its beginning cannot be set exactly, but we do know that the exchange of written reports on matters of engineering, science, and technology was established practice in many countries before the birth of Christ. Of the early manuscripts that have survived, perhaps the most popular has been *De Architectura* by Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, chief artificer of Augustus Caesar. Compiled in 27 B. C., this work summarized all that was then known about city-planning, materials, civil and military structures, interior decoration, hydraulics, technical instruments, and machines and engines.[1]

Although the art of technical writing is almost as old as science itself, the profession of technical writing has a recent beginning. In this country, before World War I, the writers were the doers. Scientists and engineers, whether in industry, business, or government, wrote their own copy. Not until the industrial decentralization of the 1920's did they receive any editorial assistance from the staff level, and this unfortunately ended at the start of the depression.

The real impetus came in World War II, when a special task force was recruited to deliver the paperwork. These "technical writers" soon established beachheads of their own in the documentary wastes of Washington, and by the end of the war had extended their front lines far into business and industry.

The object of this paper is to trace their progress since then. Obviously, in the time alloted, I cannot account for every branch of so widespread an activity. But I believe I can give you an honest picture of the general trends. To simplify the description, I will treat technical writing and technical editing as a single profession; however, this does not mean that I consider the two skills identical.

Types of Technical Writing

Technical writing is a specialized branch of the field of communications. Its purpose is to convey information accurately and efficiently to a specific audience.[2] The information may treat any technical subject: the operation of a machine, the behavior of a circuit, the development of a theory. It may take any expository form: an instruction, a definition, a summary, a survey, a comparison, an enumeration. The audience also may vary. One publication might be addressed to a technician, a second to an engineer, a third to a salesman, a fourth to a vice president. A fifth might go to a mixed audience of specialists and non-specialists.

For convenience of examination, I will divide technical writing into four general categories: routine, informal, formal, and special. *Routine publications* are characterized by their mechanized form, extreme brevity of language, and fill-in-the-blank style. Standard books, instruction manuals, and specifications sheets fall into this category. *Informal publications* include letters, memoranda, and short internal reports—such as proposals and progress reports. They are characterized by their limited scope, restricted distribution, and simple form. *Formal publications* are bound documents covering major investigations or completed portions of long-range projects. Engineering reports, research reports, textbooks, surveys, and patent applications are examples. *Special publications* range from brochures, sales pamphlets, news releases, and magazine articles, to television scripts and radio commercials. Each requires special treatment of text, format, language, and illustration; and each challenges a writer's creative ability.

A good technical writer can handle any writing assignment within the four general categories. His trade requires that he be an exacting researcher, an efficient

organizer, a skillful reporter, an accomplished teacher, a master of prose, a devotee of science and engineering, a patron of the graphic arts, a publisher's apprentice, and, in truth, a midwife. For a technical writer's usefulness is undeniable, yet often unappreciated. He is called upon in a moment of crises and forgotten the next. His surgery—and his fee—must be painless; his product, superior.

Stimuli

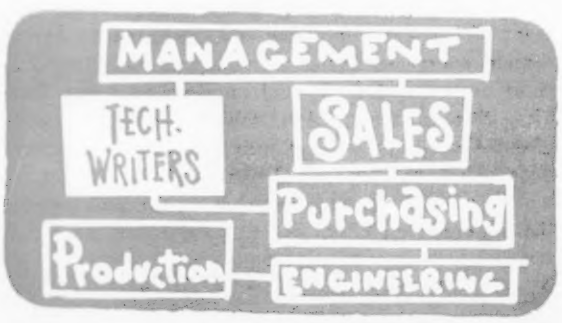
Since technical writing entails a variety of jobs that require a wide range of talents, no single stimulus can be credited with shaping the growth of the profession. Rather, numerous forces have dovetailed to provide the necessary strength.

Foremost has been the external pressure from all areas of science and engineering. Our continual technological expansion since the war has been accompanied by a shortage of scientists and engineers and a demand for more and more technical literature. This unbalance has opened the field of technical writing to the specialist.

Secondly, the vanguard of technical writers who did not return to prewar jobs in other fields has long been swallowed up. This gap has provided a strong inducement for joining or rejoining the profession. As the large number of newspaper advertisements for writers and editors testifies, even a newcomer can screen his prospective employers, choose the type of writing he likes to do best, and, to a degree, angle for salary and fringe benefits.

Thirdly, certain internal incentives have contributed much to the overall growth. I refer to such things as a man's inborn desire to write, his earnest interest in the world of science and engineering, and his urge to dig out the facts and to share them with others. Then, too, there is the challenge of entering a new field, the satisfaction of filling a need, and the thrill of actually participating in important scientific developments. And to these we must add the undeniable itch to see one's name in print.

I do not consider salary to be a major inducement, nor do I consider it a deterrent. One hears of fabulous offers for writers in certain high-priority military projects; however, these salaries are not standard. In general, a technical writer's pay runs higher than that of a college teacher, but below that of a practicing engineer—particularly in the senior grades. I sampled six companies in the Boston area and found that the average annual salary for technical writers was $6800 in 1956; whereas the engineers in the same plants averaged close to $8000. These figures may not be representative of the national averages (or even of Boston's), but the differential seems realistic to me. Equal salary for writer and engineer is a goal that only a few large companies have been able to reach, mostly by holding out for writers with engineering degrees. The way has been opened, but unfortunately the non-engineers must continue to prove that they can produce as good copy as their technically trained colleagues.



Although the stimuli that I have just mentioned are all acting in favor of the technical writer, they are not void of danger. The reason is simple: technical writing is a service function designed to compensate for a deficiency, and nothing could harm the profession more than an influx of poorly trained, uninspired writers who fail to realize that the growth of the profession rests entirely upon their growth as individuals.

Backgrounds

The question of what constitutes an ideal technical writer has been the subject of many discussions at meetings and conventions of the profession's organized members. Although opinions as to this gentleman's specifications differ in some of the minor details, most employers believe that he should have a cool head, an inquisitive mind, a warm personality, a bachelor's degree in science or engineering, a post-graduate degree in English, and several years of technical writing experience.

All this is fine, but purely academic. Men with a bachelor's degree in engineering or science simply haven't taken graduate work in English, any more than English majors have followed up with technical degrees. The flesh-and-blood counterparts of our ideal writer just do not measure up to his educational standard. They have entered the profession through the back door: from journalism, from publishing, from sales, from personnel, from public relations, from administration, from science and engineering, from teaching, from advertising, from law, and even from industry's libraries.

Yes, practically all of our experienced technical writers are retreads. But they have many useful miles left in them. How many depends on the quality of the original casing as well as on the sturdiness of the new tread. If we assume given amounts of native ability, intelligence, and writing experience, those best qualified are the graduate engineers and scientists with

(Continued on page 8)

HOW TO BE A PURIST

Frederick T. VanVeen

It is generally considered not a very nice thing to be called . . .

If you pay more than casual attention to grammar in your work as a technical writer or editor, you should be prepared to endure being thought a bit sticky by at least a few of your associates. If you are really sensitive to the fine points of grammar—if, for instance, you subject a repro typist to the rigor of splicing in a "which" for a "that" because the clause is nonrestrictive, you may be sure that others call you—in whispered tones at coffee break, in jest at sales meetings, and perhaps even on the walls of the mens' room—a purist. It is generally considered not a very nice thing to be called, and you'll have to safeguard your family from exposure to the libel, lest the kids next door taunt your Junior with, "Nyah, nyah, your father's a purist!" It may even ultimately lead to discrete inquiries about your loyalty, with possible revocation of your security clearance, purism sounding to some people almost as dangerous as pacifism. If you want to be regarded as a purist, don't want to be regarded as a purist, or want to know what to expect when you become regarded as a purist, this is written for you.

How far can a technical editor go without being a "purist"? That depends on the people involved and on the type of writing he's doing. Generally, however, he cannot make an issue over split infinitives or dangling participles. Few people care about the first, and fewer recognize the second. He cannot let it be discovered that he knows the difference between "compare to" and "compare with". And he can never, never be heard lamenting the constant misuse of "infer", "protagonist", "credence", etc., or he may find himself eating lunch alone the next day.

"Purist" means, according to my dictionary, "one solicitous, esp. oversolicitous, about purity or nicety, esp. in language." Whether you are a purist (in its worse sense) depends on whether someone else thinks you are too careful about language. In other words, if you are to avoid the brand, you must adjust your standards to those of your associates, so that they will agree that "Hank is just careful enough about language". Even then you fit one meaning of the word.

But there comes to each of us a time when we are called upon to accept or reject our principles. I once dreamed that I was tied to a stake, with dozens of development engineers dancing merrily around. At my feet was an enormous pile of Fowler's MEU's, soaked in kerosene, and one (chief) engineer threatened to apply the torch unless I publicly renounced all rules of grammar. I refused and the pyre was ignited, while the R&D boys shouted mixed profanities like "irregardless!" and "between you and I". My devotion to grammar actually falls short of such heroism, and yours may fall shorter. But you may have noticed that the more you learn about grammar, the more respect you hold for it. The correlary, I insist, is that an indifference to the laws of grammar betrays an ignorance of the subject. Think of this the next time someone counters your editing with, "Well, that's being pretty picky about grammar, isn't it?" You can back down and admit it's too fine a point to bother about, and escape being thought a purist. Or you can reflect that just because this dolt doesn't care (ergo know) about grammar is no reason why you should be party to his ignorance. Words are your tools, and you are going to protect them from misuse, just as a carpenter would protect his screw-driver from those who would use it for a chisel. If this makes you a purist, by the bearded prophet, make the most of it!

Now that you're a purist, there are a few things you must know about the calling. Besides being an object of some derision, you will also be a sitting target for anyone who knows how to read a dictionary. Someday one of the "others" descends on your office, word-book in hand.

"Say, Hank", he tells you, "first spelling is 'sirup', not 'syrup', like you say". He has waited a long time to pounce on you; be charitable enough to send him away convinced that you are grievously embarrassed. This is nothing compared with what happens when you decide to publish a little guide book on grammar for internal use. What is more fun than finding grammatical slips, misspellings, or typos in an article or book on English? You do it, I do it, and our readers, bless them, do it.

You have unwittingly taken on another title besides that of purist. You are literary expert, and when the boys upstairs have an argument over who wrote "Tom Sawyer", they're already looking up your extension,

(Continued on page 18)

GROWTH OF TECHNICAL WRITING

(Continued from page 6)

a flair for writing; running a close second are the English and journalism majors with undergraduate courses in science and engineering or equivalent technical experience.

I would not blame anyone for disagreeing with me on this rating. For native ability, intelligence, and experience vary in amount with the individual; and any "hidden" or special characteristic might make a man not in either of the above categories the ideal man for a particular job. Therefore, I must hastily add that I am reporting what I believe to be the general trend; examination of individual case histories would prove that there are many exceptions. Also, I have been forced to base my remarks on fragmentary and, in some cases, intangible evidence: want ads, journal articles, personal interviews, and personal experience. Quantitative evidence is being gathered by the professional societies through questionnaires to writers and employers, but unfortunately the results will not be available for several months.

"What about new blood?" "Where does it come from?" Actually, there is no constant source from which the profession can draw its young men and women. Only one college, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, offers a post-graduate degree in technical writing, and only one, Simmons, has organized a four-year undergraduate program in this field. The situation is remarkably confused: the profession is worried, industry is worried, and the colleges are worried—but for different reasons. With one hand, industry tweaks the profession for not providing more engineer-writers; with the other, it begs the colleges to supply more practicing engineers and scientists. The colleges, in turn, squirm from the pressures of overpopulation and underproduction; while the professor wearily treads water.

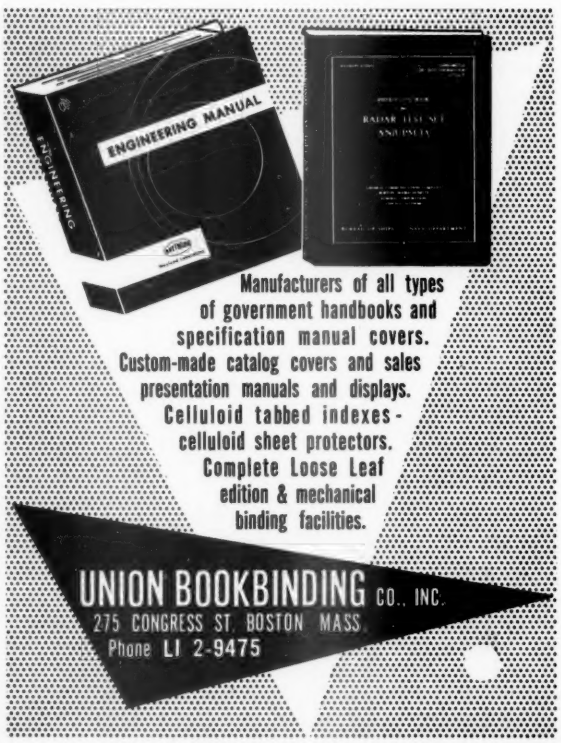
A reasonable solution to the dilemma will come only through closer cooperation. Industry should restate its specifications for technical writers in terms of the best *available* talent. I know, employers *accept* less than the ideal, but the acceptable writer should not be treated as a second-class citizen. In turn, the profession must raise the level in its personnel barrel by educating the public in general, and the college population in particular, about the aims and potentialities of technical writing and editing, and by encouraging would-be writers to pursue formal training in science or engineering. The colleges also must show more initiative. Technical writing courses are far too few even in the leading technical institutions. Every college should offer at least an elective in the subject. The technical colleges and the state and private universities should go further. Each student enrolled in an engineering or science school ought to be given a semester of basic instruction in technical writing. This could be a required course offered by the English Department or it could be a cooperative program, such as we give at M. I. T., in which the English instructor teaches writing as an integral part of selected engineering subjects. Special seminars and extension courses for industry are fine, but they should supplement this basic training.

Evidence of Growth

The best evidence of the growth of the technical writing profession is the rapid rise in membership of the technical writers' societies during the past five years. Three organizations have now reached national status: The Society of Technical Writers (STW), The Association of Technical Writers and Editors (TWE), and The Technical Publishing Society (TPS). Each began modestly as a local professional group. STW and TWE, with activities concentrated mainly in the East, have a combined membership of close to 2000, TPS, covering the west coast area, has about 600 members. Top news was made last fall when STW and TWE at joint convention announced their decision to merge. Then this spring, TPS voted to follow. Undoubtedly the triple merger will greatly strengthen the drawing power of the profession.

Further proof of growth can be found in the personnel files of the nation's industries. *Career,* the annual guide to business opportunities, lists 50 companies as

(Continued on page 16)


ENGINEERING MANUAL
Manufacturers of all types of government handbooks and specification manual covers.
Custom-made catalog covers and sales presentation manuals and displays.
Celluloid tabbed indexes - celluloid sheet protectors.
Complete Loose Leaf edition & mechanical binding facilities.
UNION BOOKBINDING CO., INC.
275 CONGRESS ST. BOSTON MASS.
Phone LI 2-9475

NOTES ON PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS RELATING TO TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Tracy W. Simpson

Although differences of style are to be found, there is a trend toward uniformity . . .

Certain practices as to punctuation, sentence structure, word choice, etc., have been adopted by the engineering societies for their bulletins, transactions, and magazines. Other related editorial practices are exemplified in the leading technical publications.

Although differences of style are to be found, there is a trend toward uniformity among the leaders which well may be a guide for those who write reports, catalogs, instruction manuals, and technical articles for the engineering or scientifically trained reader.

Because these practices differ in some respects from what is taught in usual courses in English composition (or taught to stenographers in business colleges), this report endeavors to bring together one version of these practices that reasonably conforms to present-day engineering style.

1. Omission of periods after nearly all abbreviations

Engineering reports usually contain many abbreviations. If these are made to end with a period, the sentences become overly filled with periods—which tends to hold back the reader from a quick-glance understanding of the sentences. As a consequence nearly all periods are omitted after abbreviations.

Also the abbreviations are never capitalized unless the words for which they stand should be capitalized, as when used in part of a title.

Typical abbreviations that contain no periods are kv, kw, amp, deg, diam, cir-mils (the adjective), ft per min, ft, kw-hr, lb, rms, rev per min (or rpm), d-c, a-c, (both when used as adjectives) and so on.

The abbreviation for inches, however, ends in a period (in.) so it will not be mistaken for the preposition.

The abbreviation is the same, regardless of whether it is singular or plural; that is, amps, lbs, degs, are not approved forms.

2. Omission of commas after each adjective of a series in cases where the adjectives define a particular subject

Such adjectives are sometimes referred to as *specification adjectives.*

Examples:

"A motor-driven double-worm-gear grease-filled speed reduction unit."

"Four spring-applied nested sliding-shoe contacts."

"A double-flanged riveted galvanized steel base."

Though some do not follow it, the above practice is often modified when any of the specification adjectives starts or ends with an arabic number; that is,

"A Type TW-3, 230-kv, 800-amp outdoor disconnecting air switch." This form is preferred as compared with

"A Type TW-3 230-kv 800-amp outdoor disconnecting air switch."

Some large firms use the latter form, however.

If the series of adjectives is not such as to define the subject, but is merely a series that relates to attributes of the subject, then the usual comma is placed after each adjective, including the comma before the final *and.*

Example:

"The clean, attractive, and well-proportioned circuit breaker commanded the admiration of all visitors."

Some schools still teach that the comma should be omitted before the final *and* of a series of adjectives. Particularly in engineering work there is liable to be a misunderstanding when this is done; there is too much possibility that the last two adjectives of the series may be thought of as representing a group instead of separate adjectives.

The best today's opinion on this matter is well stated in the following quotation from the latest edition of the Century Collegiate Handbook, revised edition:

"At one time it was common usage to omit the comma before *and* in a series having the form *a, b,* and *c.* This older usage cannot be called incorrect, but it is not the preferred form."

3. Adequate hyphenating of compound adjectives

One of the earmarks of good engineering writing is adequate hyphenating of compound adjectives so the compound will be perfectly clear to the engineering reader.

It is important, of course, to know what words should be compounded.

Example: Consider the expression previously used—

"A double-flanged riveted galvanized steel base."

The base is a riveted one; it is also a galvanized base; but it is also a steel base. Some might use the expression *galvanized-steel* but to do so would imply that the base was made of material that *was galvanized before* fabrication. Actually this is not the case, so the hyphen is omitted between *galvanized* and *steel.* Definitely, the the base has two flanges and it is not two bases. This shade of meaning is covered by the compounding *double-flanged.*

When applying this rule abbreviations are similarly compounded; i.e., a d-c motor, a 230-kv switch, a 1200-amp circuit breaker. However, one says, "The line potential is 230 kv; current is 1200 amp." In these cases the abbreviations "kv" and "amp" are not used as adjectives.

Sometimes there is a tendency to use too many compound adjectives. This can be avoided by recasting the sentence.

Example:

"The auxiliary switch has twelve stages, mounted on a full-floating support" is preferable to "a full-floating twelve-stage auxiliary switch."

CAUTION: Do not hyphenate when the first word ends in *ly.*

Example:

"The highly polished surface reflects heat."

The suffix *ly* preceding a participle takes on the character of a hyphen in that it closely ties the words together. No additional tie is necessary. Usually the *ly* is the mark of an adverb, as in this case. It modifies the participle *polished,* which is used as an adjective.

4. Electric or electrical

The word *electric* is used as an adjective when its subject produces, arises from, is actuated by, or carries electricity—or is capable of so doing. The word *electrical* as an adjective implies related to, pertaining to, or associated with electricity, but not having its properties or characteristics. Examples: electric pumps, electric motor, electric switch, electric circuits, electrical industry, electricial units, electrical engineer.

PUBLICATION ENGINEERS
TECHNICAL WRITERS

Write for SPERRY

And you'll be writing new chapters in a 50 year history of engineering accomplishment

If you have the background or facility for writing instruction books or technical manuals, here is the career opportunity for you! Training in mathematics, physics, electrical, aeronautical or mechanical engineering required.

New opportunities are continually unfolding. Sperry's diverse projects mean many different doors are open to you. Back of all this is the solidity of the Sperry story from the very beginning. It is an engineering epic, filled with examples of ingenuity and creative imagination. This is a healthy, inspiring atmosphere for engineers and engineering writers.

- RELOCATION ALLOWANCES
- LIBERAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
- AMPLE HOUSING IN PLEASANT SUBURBS
- MODERN PLANT WITH LATEST TECHNICAL FACILITIES
- ASSOCIATION WITH OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

APPLY IN PERSON
Mon. through Fri. 9 AM to 3 PM
OR SUBMIT RESUME

SPERRY
GYROSCOPE COMPANY
Division of Sperry Rand Corp.
370 Old Country Road
(near Washington Ave.)
Garden City, Long Island, N. Y.

5. Introductory expressions

The system of close punctuation described in the appendices of some dictionaries requires that nearly all introductory words, phrases, or clauses are to be set off by commas when the expression is out of its natural order in the sentence. Such introductory expressions are used to avoid monotony and to provide continuity with respect to previous sentences.

The best present-day thought, however, is that the comma should not be used when the word, phrase, or *short* clause is of the adverbial type and states when, where, how, how much, etc.

Example:

"At nameplate interrupting rating there is no jarring of the foundation slab."

Here the introductory phrase modifies *jarring*, stating the condition *when* there is no jarring.

Similarly many transitional introductory words or short phrases that start a sentence were formerly set off by commas, but it is now recognized as good practice to omit them as a means of speeding-up the quick understanding of the sentence. Among the words after which the comma may be omitted are—*also, therefore, consequently, as a consequence.*

Other words and phrases that are more or less directive or are interjections should be set-off by commas when they introduce a sentence or main clause.
Examples: *After all, in the first place, on the contrary, definitely, however.*

6. Will or shall

The use of the word *shall* to express first-person simple futurity has about passed out of use in technical correspondence and report writing. This is apparently because of the conversational abbreviation *I'll* which does not distinguish between will and shall. Also there is very little of such writing in the first person.

The customary differences of usage between *would* and *should,* however, should be followed.

7. That or which

Use *that* if the phrase or clause limits or defines; use *which* if it supplements or explains.

Examples:

"Assemblies *that* are not easy to inspect are designed so as to require no inspection."

"A large margin of time is provided *which* may be utilized for relaying purposes."

"The Golden Gate Bridge, *which* is high enough above the water to permit passage of the largest ships, is over one mile long."

In the last two sentences the clauses supplement or explain, in the first sentence the clause defines a particular kind of assembly. In the last sentence the clause is set off by commas because the clause is non-restrictive; that is, the information in the clause is purely incidental. The second sentence does not have a comma before *which* because the clause is restrictive; that is, the purpose of the sentence is to convey the use to which the large margin of time may be put.

8. Main clauses joined by a connective

Though it is recognized procedure and so taught in schools, it is mentioned that all *main* clauses joined by the following connectives require a comma before the connective: *and, or, but, for, though, although* (both of which mean about the same as *but*). Use a semi-colon if the connective is missing.

In a main clause the thought is independent of what is in the preceding clause; that is, it is capable of standing by itself.

Example:

"The transformer pockets are strongly reinforced by welded gussets, and they are subjected to the same hydraulic test as is applied to the balance of the tank."

If the clause is subordinate to the preceding clause, so that its full understanding cannot be had directly or by implication without the presence of the preceding clause, then the comma is omitted before the connective.

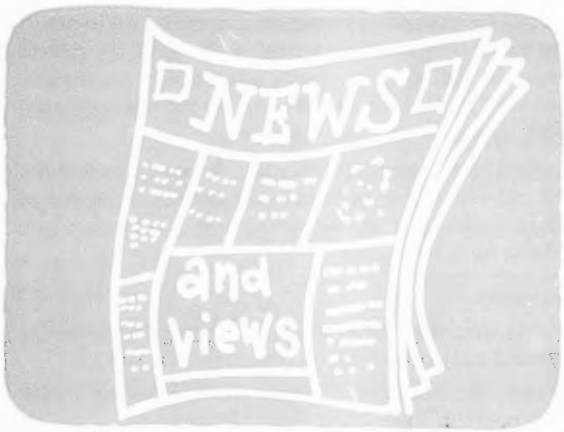
Example:

"The approach angle is small for the reason that both shoe and blade are beveled at acute angles."

(Continued on page 17)

The Recording & Statistical Corporation specializes in Offset Lithography and Letterpress Printing. This concentration of effort, coupled with unique experience, enables us to offer what we consider the best commercial reproduction in single and multi-color printing for all purposes.

RECORDING & STATISTICAL CORP.
55 Wm. T. Morrissey Blvd.
Boston 25, Massachusetts
Telephone AVenue 2-8007



1957 STWE NATIONAL CONVENTION— ONE MAN'S OPINION

It was physically impossible for anyone to attend every session of the convention, so my comments are restricted to the sessions I attended, what I observed, and the opinions I heard from some of my fellow conventioneers.

I must say that the program committee set up a fine convention. Most of the talks were very good and informative; some speakers, however, were not very intesting but then they all can't be good.

I was a little disappointed with the workshop sessions. I guess I was expecting something more. The term "workshop" may be deceiving. I don't know who is to blame but I expected more audience participation, and panel discussion than was witnessed at these "workshops". It could be that the audiences were too large, and people are reticent when it comes to speaking before a group of strange people.

The various chapter displays at the convention were most interesting, and should be encouraged even more so at the next convention. I think the North American Printing Corporation of New York City had the most interesting display (I should say gimmick). It was a one-half hour color and sound film on offset lithography. I hope the exhibitors at next year's convention take some heed to this idea.

Now to some of the comments we overheard: With all these "workshop" sessions on a wide variety of subjects, it was surprising that there was not one session on STWE's publications, and what can be done to improve them. (How true) The line at the advanced registration table was considerably longer than the nonexistent one at the regular registration table. One member was heard to remark that he thought it would have been more convenient not to have registered in advance. Another member remarked that he was disappointed with the fact that they did not have tours of printing facilities in the area. Tours of various plants are customary with professional conventions (hint for the next convention committee). One notable thing lacking at the convention were copies of the recent issue of The Technical Writer (the STWE Journal). We did see numerous copies of the November issue of the General Electric Review. It looks as if the conventioneers got copies of the Review before General Electric's Operating Departments (a nice thought on someone's part).

We look forward to an even better convention next year.

TUFTS SUMMER WORKSHOP TO BE REPEATED IN 1958

For the third year the Boston Chapter of STW(E) will cooperate next July with Tufts University in offering a Workshop in Technical Writing and Editing.

Dr. Paul H. Flint, Assistant Dean of Tufts' Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and a former president of STW, last summer was joined in offering the course by Dr. Francis H. Achard, Experience Associated and Philbrick Researches, Inc.; Michael DiBartolomeis, Radio Corporation of America; Ronald D. Eames, Publications Head, Raytheon Mfg. Co.; John W. Fallon, Sanders Associates; Hector E. French, Sanborn Company; John V. E. Hansen, National Research Corp.; Floyd Hickok, Laboratory for Electronics; H. Kana, Raytheon Mfg. Co.; and Kenneth A. Young, Kenneth A. Young Associates.

Hickok and Eames are also former presidents of STW, and Achard has for several years been secretary-

NEWS AND VIEWS

by Richard A. Hanousek

treasurer. DiBartolomeis has been serving as chairman of the joint membership committee during the TWE-STW coalescence.

The 1958 workshop begins on July 21 and meets every day all day for two five-day weeks, with two or three evenings each week and Wednesday afternoon of the first week free (in addition to the middle weekend) to allow visitors from the South and West an opportunity to explore the Boston area.

Enrollment is limited to 35 and all applications in hand by May 1 will be answered by May 15. Tuition is $150. Address inquiries to Dr. Paul H. Flint, Tufts University, Medford, Mass.

HAVE YOU SEEN?

Technical Communications has appeared since our last issue; this is the official journal of the Technical Publishing Society on the West Coast. We are pleased to report that this new journal is a credit to the profession and a further indication that Technical Writing, Editing, and Illustrating are all receiving increasing professional recognition.

We congratulate W. E. Welch, President of TPS, Professional Publications, Inc., the organization responsible for the publication, and A. E. Tyler, Editor. Subscriptions are available ($8.00 a year) from: *Technical Communications*, 266 S. Alexandria Avenue, Los Angeles 4, California.

We speak for the Board of STWE when we sincerely wish TPS success with *Technical Communications*, and offer them the hand of cooperation.

NEW UNDERGRADUATE COURSE TO BE OFFERED

We recently received word from Professor Erwin R. Steinberg, Head of the Department of General Studies at Margaret Morrison Carnegie College, that starting in September this college will offer an undergraduate degree with a major in technical writing and editing. Margaret Morrison College is the woman's college of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. We should have more information on this item in the next issue.

I.R.E. WRITING GROUP HAS FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION

In May 1957 the Professional Group on Engineering Writing and Speech (PGEWS) was authorized by the Institute of Radio Engineers. This group's First National Symposium was held in New York City on October 21-22, 1957. Dr. John R. Pierce of Bell Telephone Laboratories prepared the keynote address entitled "The Challenging Field of Engineering Writing and Speech". Dr. Pierce remarked that "The need for clear writing and clear speaking transcends the bounds of technology and is an obligation upon all those who have something to say . . ."

STWE is in accord with this statement, and takes this opportunity to welcome PGEWS to the groups of societies already organized in the technical writing and editing fields. Cooperation between these groups will lead to the betterment of all their members.

(Continued on Page 22)

A TIMETABLE FOR REPORT WRITING

Warren B. Bezanson

A method is proposed whereby the research project and the first draft of a standard-form report may be completed almost simultaneously.

The report is an integral part of any research project. Postponement of writing until the research has been completed often results in a report that is poorly organized and poorly executed. A method is proposed whereby the research project and the first draft of a standard-form report may be completed almost simultaneously. As shown by the blocks in the accompanying schedule, each section of a typical report is related to one or more project steps. For example, the introduction, which poses the problem, suggests possible solutions, describes previous work and its limitations, and states the object of the study, may be drafted in rough form once the project has been initiated and its objectives and the approach decided upon. Compilation of the list of references may be started once the literature search has been completed.

With this method, each stage of the project directly governs the content of a related section of the rough draft. The difficulties so often encountered in writing the entire report after the research has been completed are eliminated. The sections of the rough draft merely need to be rearranged in the desired report form (as shown in the REPORT column), the summary written, and the rough draft quickly revised and edited for publication.

TECHNICAL WRITERS...
ELECTRONICS
is the key to your future!
Whatever directions future military developments take, you may be sure ELECTRONICS will play an important part. You may also be sure that then, as now, Western Electric will be in the forefront.
If the complex electronics systems are to do their job, proper operation and maintenance is essential. This requires complete and accurate instructions – products of the Technical Writer
Technical Publications has openings for competent Technical Writers in all phases of military electronics. These positions offer:
Relocation allowance
Good salaries
Pleasant working conditions
Tuition Refund Plan
Liberal Benefit Plan
Send resumé to:
Employment Manager
Western Electric
North Carolina Works
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

PROJECT		REPORT	
Steps	*Description*	*Sections* (numbers show report section order)	*Description*
INITIATION			
1. Recommendation of previous project		(4) INTRODUCTION	Statement of problem, suggestions for possible solutions, description of previous work and its limitations, statement of object of the study
2. Result of background studies			
3. Request for research			
PLANNING			
1. Objectives, approach			
2. Literature search		(8) REFERENCES	Incomplete list of sources
3. Work outline		(5) BODY	Description of test models & equipment, procedure, method of analysis
4. Prediction of performance and correlation with data accuracy			
5. Facilities, equipment, models			
6. Data organization			
7. Type of report			
ANALYSIS			
1. Model specifications			
2. Preparation of facilities			
3. Programming calculation procedures			
4. Facilities and models to be photographed, illustrated		(11) FIGURES (10) TABLES	Visual aids to supplement text
DATA		(6) BODY	Description of data reduction methods, test results; interpretation of results
1. Photographs, tests in progress			
2. Test data accumulation			
3. Calculations			
4. Rough plotting of results (graphs, tables)		(9) APPENDICES	Information not integral to report
5. Analysis of rough plots		(8) LIST OF SYMBOLS	Definitions of symbols used in text, figures and tables
6. Data reduction and accuracy			
7. Final plotting and calculating of results		(7) REFERENCES	Complete list of sources
ORGANIZATION			
1. Formulation of conclusions, recommendations		(3) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
2. Review of project			
3. Disposition of data not used in report			
		(1) TABLE OF CONTENTS	Final arrangement of report sections
		(2) SUMMARY	Brief statement of purpose, procedure, results

TECHNICAL WRITERS FOR IBM

Major areas covered:

HOSI, HOVI, HOI, *and* IPB

written to specifications

MIL-H-7960A
MIL-H-25095
MIL-H-5475B
MIL-H-6814A
MIL-H-5005A

* Bomb-Nav-Radar AN/ASB-4
* Transistorized Circuits
* Airborne Analog and Digital Computers

Excellent salary—opportunities for advancement. Numerous company-paid benefits. Relocation expenses paid. Please write, outlining qualifications and experience, to:

Mr. P. E. Strohm, Manager
Engineering Personnel, Dept. 681J
IBM Military Products Division
Owego, New York

IBM MILITARY PRODUCTS

GROWTH OF TECHNICAL WRITING

(Continued from page 8)

offering careers to technical writers. Case histories of three of these companies will serve to illustrate the expansion. In 1941 the Sperry Gyroscope Company employed a publications group of 20 men; by 1956 the group had grown into a department of 300. Three years ago, the Glenn L. Martin Company did not have a publications staff; today its department totals about 275. The Raytheon Manufacturing Company employed technical writers and editors during World War II, but has had to increase its staff four-fold. The Greater Boston plants of Raytheon now have 90 writers and editors on the payroll; in 1949 the number was 20.

I have already mentioned the abundance of want ads for technical writers in the daily and Sunday newspapers. To those should be added the many articles, editorials, and columns that the trade magazines, professional society journals, and management periodicals have published on the subject. Rarely a month passes that some literature on technical writing does not cross my desk. The only paucity seems to be in the popular press. This is understandable but unfortunate.

The exact number of technical writers and editors presently employed by business, industry, government, and educational institutions is not known. No statistics concerning the field are given in the 1956 census report, and the 1957 *World Almanac* doesn't even mention the existence of technical writers' societies. Perhaps a reasonable guess can be made by extrapolation from representative employment figures. If we multiply the number of companies listed in *Career* by an average staff of 100 writers, we get a 5000 total. Since this figure represents only writers employed by business and industry, it perhaps should be doubled to include government and education.

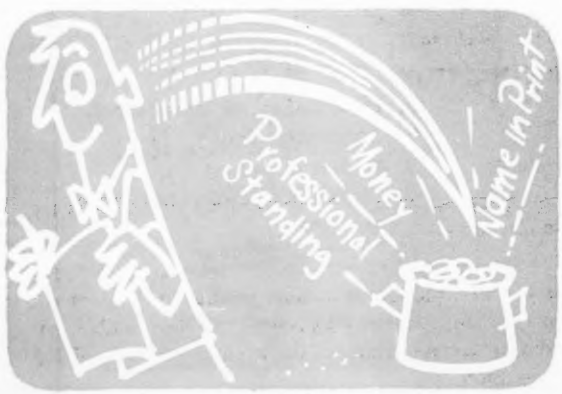
Another way to compute the total is to correlate the growth of the technical writing profession with that of Research and Development, where the main product is the written report. The literature shows that in 1941 there were 87,000 engineers and scientists working in research and development projects.[3] In 1952, the number had increased to 180,000, and in 1955, to 250,000. In other words, the population during fifteen years nearly tripled. I think it is safe to apply the same rate to technical writing. At a conservative ratio of one writer for fifty engineers, the quick total again is 5000. Since this total represents only those writers connected with Research and Development, the earlier estimate of 10,000 may be in the right ballpark.

Conclusion

I must admit that I have offered you little tangible proof of the growth of the technical writing profession. Nevertheless, I do hope that you believe, as I do, that tech writers are here to stay. They have accomplished much, but their real progress lies ahead. Robert T. Hamlett, past president of the Association of Technical Writers and Editors, has stated the case admirably: "Technical writing has finally arrived at its most important crossroad. It can take the low road and wander off into the fields of indefiniteness and discouragement which will produce an inferior profession, or it can take the high road of hard work, self-improvement, and vision which will lead to higher ground where greater service and true professional recognition can be achieved."[4] I'm sure you can guess which road Mr. Hamlett recommends—for you have been traveling it yourselves.

References

1. Miller, Walter J. and Leo E. A. Saidla. *Engineers As Writers,* D. Van Nostrand, New York, 1953.
2. Ulman, Joseph N., Jr., *Technical Reporting,* Henry Holt, New York, 1952.
3. Department of Defense. *Growth of Scientific Research and Development,* Government Printing Office, Washington, 1953.
4. Hamlett, Robert T. "Technical Writers—Good or Bad," *TWE Journal,* Fall Issue, Association of Writers and Editors, New York, 1956.



NOTES ON PREPARATION OF MS

(Continued from page 11)

Note here that the part of the sentence following *for* tells why the approach angle is small. It is a dependent or subordinate clause; the connective *for* is therefore not preceded by a comma.

9. Titles

Titles or main central headings are either fully capitalized or preferably are in upper and lower case letters (or large and small caps). All words are capitalized in the latter instance except prepositions, conjunctions, or articles that follow the first word. The style manual of the U.S. Gov't Printing Office provides that in this case both words of a hyphenated compound are to be capitalized.

Example:

"A Method of Extracting Five-Figure Cube Roots"

It is generally not customary to end a *title* with punctuation, even though the title is a sentence.

10. Subheads

Wide differences are found in style of subheads of the kind ordinarily placed on a separate line and at the left. They may be with minimum capitalization, as in this report, or the principal words may be capitalized as in *titles*. Some well-edited publications show a period after such subheads regardless of whether or not the subhead is a sentence; others omit the period; others retain the period only when the subhead is a sentence.

The choice in any case should conform to the style of other publications produced under the same auspices. If there is no style to which conformity is required, it is suggested that if the headings tend to be fairly long, they may be without body capitals and without a final period unless the subhead is a sentence. Such style is followed in this report. If the headings are mostly short ones, they may have the principal words capitalized—in which case the final period should be omitted even if the subhead is a sentence. It seems incongruous to use the sentence form (ending with a period) when all principal words are capitalized.

Minor subheads, such as are placed at the left of a line of text, are ordinarily quite short. Such subheads may well have the principal words capitalized, set off from the text by a period or by a dash, preferably the former.

Example:

"*Arc Back*. One of the difficulties with a mercury-arc rectifier is . . ."

Numbered subheads ordinarily have a period after the number, though in manuscript not to be printed a single bracket ")" is satisfactory. If the number embodies a decimal fraction, the decimal point is all that is necessary.

Examples:

"4.2 Triode Characteristics" The use of a period after a single number is exemplified in this report.

In all cases of subheads the style should be consistent throughout the publication; that is, do not change the style in a single publication merely because some subheads are of different length than others.

11. Series in a paragraph

Suitable style for numbered series in text is as shown in the following:

"Photosensitive devices can be divided into three classes: (1) photoemissive tubes, (2) photovoltaic cells, and (3) photoconductive cells.

12. Tabulated series

Suitable style is shown by the following:

"Photosensitive devices can be divided into three classes:

1. Photoemissive tubes which depend on the emission of electrons from a photo cathode.
2. Photovoltaic cells which produce a small generated voltage when exposed to light.
3. Photoconductive cells which change resistance when illuminated.

Note in the above that the explanatory clauses are introduced by *which* instead of by *that*, because they explain instead of *define*.

13. Mathematical work

If a formula (numeric or symbolic) is centered below the accompanying text, do not affix a period even though the formula completes a sentence.

Example:

"Expanding and dropping terms containing e^2 and higher, we have

$$d^2 = 9N^{5/2}e \qquad (7)$$

To reduce typesetting cost express formulas in one line as far as possible.

Example:

$E_p = E_b/2^{1/2}$ or $E_p = 2^{-1/2}E_b$ is preferable to $E_p = \frac{E_b}{\sqrt{2}}$

A short formula in text is set off by commas.

Example:

"Ohm's Law, $I = E/R$, represents the basic proportionality of the steady-state d-c system."

14. Explanatory wording in illustrations

Punctuate as little as possible. Even a complete sentence that is directly a part of an illustration need not end in a period. However, if under *Notes* or equivalent, the sentences become a part of text and should be punctuated as such.

15. Figure numbers and captions under illustrations

Captions beneath illustrations are preferably capitalized as if they were centered subheads (see sec. 10 hereof). A period should follow the figure number unless it is a decimal number.

Example: A caption suitable to accompany a report of the style of this report would not have the prinicpal words of the caption capitalized; e.g.,

"Fig. 8.4 Output-voltage wave shape showing effect of phase shift"

However, it is customary in catalog work to have the principal words of a caption capitalized. In the case of long captions of many lines, it is better to limit the capitalization only to the principal words of the first line or first sentence.

* * * * *

The style described herein differs in many respects from European practice. Consequently works that embody translations often carry the European style to avoid the cost of rewriting.

Typists, linotype operators, and printers' proofreaders will often make changes in copy given to them because based on their training it embodies 'mistakes.' It is suggested that a note accompany the technical-writer's manuscript to explain that engineering style is followed instead of the usual literary style. Reference to an editorial-standard bulletin of a professional society—or sending one along with the manuscript—is helpful in lining-up such people whenever new ones are employed. The more they study the style standard the more they realize it is based on sound reasoning, and they are pleased to conform.

HOW TO BE A PURIST

(Continued from page 7)

and heaven help you if you say Huckleberry Finn. A literary expert, 1957 model, knows who wrote anything and everything. It doesn't matter whether he ever read anything. You can read until you're blind, but unless you excel at literary name-dropping, you're a boob. Someone mentions "The Magic Mountain" and you nod and say "Mann", and in one syllable you've indicated that you not only have read that book but are probably conversant with all of Mann's works. So, unless you're already up on who wrote what, make a list of authors and works and memorize them.

Perhaps the trickiest problem that you the purist must face is what to do when you must choose between the principle and the practical. For instance, suppose your boss has written, in a business letter, "Realizing that haste was imperative, our letter was sent . . .", and someone has brazenly suggested that "Realizing" was a dangling participle. The boss, to teach his assailant a lesson, calls upon you to issue an ex cathedra decree in his favor. Let prudence be your guide here. You can't insult your boss, of course; but you *are* a purist, and can earn respect only by sticking to your guns to the end. You tell him he's wrong, adding some such balm as "I make the same mistake myself now and then" or "Even the best writers do it", etc.

As you can see, the battle just begins when you have achieved the position of company purist. It's all not without reward, though; deep down your friends admire your conscientous efforts to treat grammar scientifically.

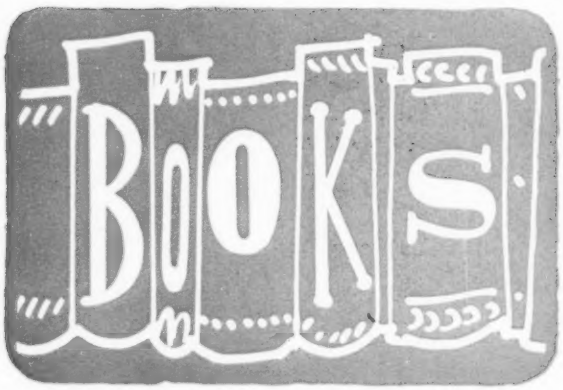
See you at the stake!

Technical Publications — Industrial Advertising

sales catalogs
direct mail
reports

Approved for Government Work
ARMY
NAVY
AIR FORCE
AEC

S. GUNNAR MYRBECK & CO.
QUINCY MASS., 1458 HANCOCK STREET, *Ma 9-3550*
WASHINGTON, D. C., 1341 CONNECTICUT AVE., NW *De 2-8585*



A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF CHEMISTRY. Second edition. E. J. Crane, Austin M. Patterson, and Eleanor B. Marr. 397 + xv pages. New York: John Wiley & Sons (1957). $9.50.

This reviewer has no intention of being competely unemotional about a new edition, especially such a good one, of one of the classics in the field of chemistry literature. The 30 years which have passed since the first edition have seen a tremendous growth in the extent of the chemical literature, accompanied by many new attempts to cope with it, among them the efforts of the ACS Division of Chemical Literature. Not since 1940, however, has there been a new edition of *"Crane and Patterson," "Mellon,"* or *"Soule,"* as the three standard texts on the chemical literature have come to be known. In recent years this has worked a real hardship on the neophyte literature chemist, the teacher (and students) of chemical-literature courses, and the laboratory chemist who really wishes to use the chemical literature.

Where and *how* to obtain information from the chemical literature are stressed in this book. Sources described include books, periodicals, patents, government publications, and trade literature. Data are given on indices and libraries. A chapter on procedure in conducting and presenting literature searches is included. The book also contains appendices which will aid the reader in keeping current with chemical information.

B. H. Weil

A DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN USAGE. Bergen Evans and Cornelia Evans. 567 Pages. New York: Random House (1957). $5.95.

Every good writer and editor has (or should have) on his within-arm's-reacn reference shelf three general classes of basic books on language (excluding specialties): dictionaries, thesauri, and (for want of a more succint categorical label) books on usage. Through no oversight, grammars have been omitted from this list, for they, as a rule, are pervaded with the chauvinistic approach; they attempt to tell us what *should* be done, what *ought* to be used. Hopeless and outmoded though it is, few authors of grammars have seen fit to forsake this attitude.

Language, properly used, is a living, constantly changing thing. As such, a book on usage can, at best, report on how language *is* being used, leaving the *oughts* to the windmill-fighters. This, the Evanses assert in their preface, they have done. In large measure they have succeeded. The degree to which they have not constitutes the outstanding weakness of the book; yet, in this weakness ultimately may lie its greatest strength—its humanness. The Evanses, even as you and I, often lapse into subjectiveness in their treatment of a word or phrase. Unfortunately, in some instances, this subjectiveness reflects their British upbringing, though their adult lives have been spent in this country. The result sometimes is a bit confusing to the intelligent and perceptive reader.

There's one big mystery that has puzzled your reviewer since reading the preface for the first time. Since the book deals with American usage (with a smattering of the British thrown in for comparative purposes), then why have the Evanses, notwithstanding the existence of Noah Webster's, the ACD, and many other excellent American dictionaries, seen fit to . . . draw information on . . . the individual word entries . . . chiefly from the *Oxford English Dictionary,"* an excellent work, but full of Britishisms? Perhaps Dr. Evans or the publisher can help out with an explanation.

Most treatises on usage refer to the various levels and types of English by relatively well-known terms, such as *formal, informal, colloquial,* or *vulgar.* The Evanses have dreamed up a new—and good—one: *"standard English."* It is used freely in the preface, but one must arrive at page 473 to learn what is meant by it.

No matter; a tremendous amount of effort has gone into compiling this dictionary and, despite its minor shortcomings — and they *are* minor — it deserves a prominent place on the shelf beside H. W. Fowler's "Dictionary of Modern English Usage."

Many of the articles treat clearly and thoroughly various types of words, punctuation, grammar, and the parts of speech. To avoid overworking your imagination, words are liberally cross-indexed. The authors, too, are vehement in deploring the use of cliches. Amen!

Making most of their points by example, Bergen and Cornelia Evans have sprinkled the book liberally with a sly wit that makes the book a delight to read, whether thumbed through for an evening's entertainment, or used for specific reference as the authority on "The Last Word."

R. M. Stern

(Continued on page 22)

HELP WANTED

TECHNICAL WRITERS

AND EDITORS

APPLY LOCAL STWE CHAPTER

ALBUQUERQUE

Lee F. Parman
5212 Arvilla Ave., N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico

BOSTON

Kenneth A. Young
233 Harvard Street
Brookline, Mass.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

Paul Lang
c/o Carrier Corporation
Thompson Road
Syracuse, New York

CENTRAL OHIO

Samuel C. Wright
712 Martha Lane
Columbus, Ohio

CHICAGO (STW)

Russel A. Kasmar
633 Saylor Avenue
Elmhurst, Ill.

CHICAGO (TWE)

Mrs. E. Cortelyou
Armour Research Foundation
10 West 35th Street
Chicago, Ill.

CINCINNATI

Joseph H. Woodburn
580 Lowell Avenue
Cincinnati 20, Ohio

CONNECTICUT

Sherman H. Hubelbank
2 Carlyle Road
West Hartford 7, Conn.

DELAWARE VALLEY

Dr. Harry Arader
Project Big Ben
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa.

EASTERN IOWA

R. Lloyd Jones
State University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

EASTERN ONTARIO

J. F. Whiting
Aluminium Labs. Ltd.
P.O. Box 84
Kingston, Ont., Canada

EDGEWOOD

Alvin M. Jupiter
P.O. Box 71
Edgewood, Maryland

FORT WAYNE

Jacques Harlow
5040 Southfield Drive
Fort Wayne, Indiana

FORT WORTH

R. Dumas
c/o Convair
Fort Worth, Texas

GROTON

Benjamin C. Marion
172 Hynes Avenue
Groton, Connecticut

MOHAWK

Steven D. Smith
Rm. 318, Bldg. 8
Alco Products Inc.
Schenectady 5, N. Y.

MONTREAL

H. S. James-Smith
4860 Maplewood Ave.
St. Laurent, P.Q.
Canada

NEW YORK (STW)

Emil Filepp
93 Church Street
Nanuet, New York

NEW YORK (TWE)

Stello Jordan
Sperry Gyroscope Co.
Great Neck, New York

NIAGARA FRONTIER

Dr. B. B. Schaeffer
Olin Mathieson Chemical Corp.
Niagara Falls, N. Y.

NORTHERN OHIO

Rex Culler
General Motors Corporation
2160 West 106th Street
Cleveland, Ohio

OAK RIDGE

Paul Abbott
1303 Wilson Road
Knoxville, Tenn.

PHILADELPHIA

Paul R. Reed
3 Barry Lane
Wallingford, Pa.

PITTSBURGH

Hazel Anderson
Bureau of Mines
4800 Forbes Street
Pittsburgh, Pa.

POUGHKEEPSIE

C. Ray Lemley
23 Marwood Drive
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

Walter Mimnaugh
Bendix Research Labs.
4855 Fourth Street
Detroit 1, Mich.

TRIPLE CITIES

Noel Capettini
Editing and Pub. Div.
I.B.M. Corporation
Endicott, New York

TWIN CITIES

L. V. Rozycki
Minneapolis-Honeywell
2600 Ridgway Road
Minneapolis, Minn.

WASHINGTON

H. Lee Shimberg
Publications Division
Naval Ordnance Laboratory
White Oak, Maryland

WICHITA

Robert B. Hess
1122 Fabrique Drive
Wichita, Kansas

WINSTON-SALEM

Jack Thompson
664 West 4th Street
Winston-Salem, N. C.

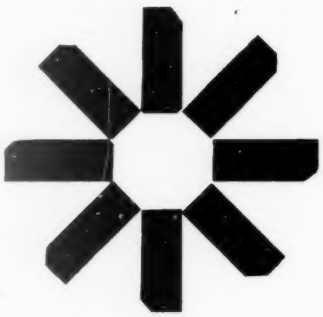
BOOKS *(Continued from page 19)*

ENTERPRISE IN OIL. Kendall Beaton. 815 pages. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts (1957). $7.50.

A fine example of the biography of a company, this large volume portrays the history of the Shell Oil Company in the United States. It should be of considerable interest to many in the petroleum field.

Mr. Beaton spent the major part of ten years gathering, digging, probing, analyzing, evaluating the facts about a company that started from nothing in 1912 and grew to become a billion-dollar, nationwide enterprise by 1950.

Well-illustrated and documented, 45 pages are devoted to citations of sources from which the author gathered his material. One of the appendices includes 10 useful statistical tables. **R. M. Stern**



SPECIALISTS IN IBM PARTS DATA PROCESSING

WE OFFER MORE ECONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY IN TABULATING

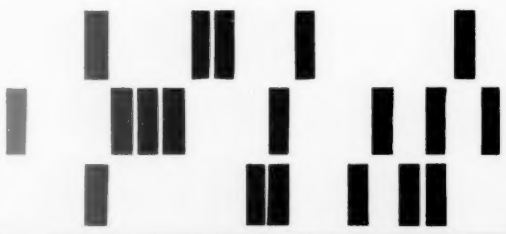
Illustrated and non-illustrated parts breakdown
- Group assembly lists
- Alpha-numeric lists
- Reference designation lists

Provisioning parts breakdowns
Bills of material
Vendor data lists
Special parts tabulations

Our IBM procedure eliminates the extra proof-readings of ordinary methods and the service is complete from the furnishing of our specially designed parts listing card to the final tabulated repro copy meeting government specifications.

INTERSTATE TABULATING SERVICE

93 Worth St. New York 13 WAlker 5-1242



NEWS AND VIEWS *(Continued from page 13)*

TABULATING EQUIPMENT AND HANDBOOKS

Mr. Arnold Abrams (STWE) has organized and is now directing the Interstate Tabulating Service, 93 Worth Street, New York City, specializing in the preparation of parts break-downs, bills of material and data lists on IBM tabulating equipment. J. W. Mendelsohn is General Manager of ITS. As President of Illustrated Technical Products Corp. for twelve years, Mr. Abrams became widely known in the field of preparing parts manuals and components of parts manuals.

At the beginning of 1957, Mr. Abrams saw excellent possibilities for the use of IBM tabulating equipment in preparing the various break-downs and lists used in parts manuals.

The present tabulating procedures and controls for part break-downs were developed, tested and incorporated in the ITS organization.

By specializing in the preparation of the various parts break-downs, bills of materials, data lists and related tabulations, the organization has created a number of advantages that are vitally necessary in gaining the maximum benefits from the use of IBM tabulating equipment.

Editor's Note: Communications for this column should be directed to R. A. Hanousek, c/o Editorial Office of the STWE REVIEW.

FAY FOTO SERVICE INC

Specialists for 30 Years in TECHNICAL, INDUSTRIAL, and COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

43-45 WEST CANTON STREET, BOSTON

CO 7-2000

Wire Sharp Photographs For Technical Publications

BORO OFFSET CORP.

Photo-Offset • Lithography • Reproduction

In many cases reproduction is more economical than printing.

EUGENE B. MARTENS, Chairman

25 Lafayette Street Brooklyn 1, New York

TRiangle 5-2485

LETTERS

(Continued from page 3)

I happened on a copy the other day and read it from cover to cover with great interest. The magazine seemed very well balanced in content. I thought that all the articles were worth while, and that all were competently written. I was pleased to note, too, that somebody had apparently taken the trouble to proof-read the galleys. Unfortunately, not all publications in our field receive such skill and care in preparation.

I am not a member of the STW or the TWE but would be interested in joining if you plan to issue your journal on a regular schedule. I have been a technical writer and editor for 15 years, and presently I am head of the editorial group at a government laboratory. I am a Fellow and former member of the Board of Directors of the Technical Publishing Society.

Sincerely yours,
H. L. Chadbourne
La Jolla, California

Welcome to STWE.—Ed.

September 5, 1957

Dear Mr. Frehsee:

This is just a note to you, as President of TWE, to express my admiration and appreciation for the handsome format and stimulating content of the last issue of the TWE *Journal*. Will you please convey my congratulations to Mr. Lytel and his staff for their splendid work? A journal like this fills an aching need in our field and does great credit to our association.

Yours sincerely,

Frank R. Smith
Associate Professor of English
Air Force Institute of Technology
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

November 14, 1957

Dear Mr. Lytel:

I have just seen a copy of *The Technical Writer* published jointly by STW and TWE. I am impressed by its contents and appearance and found the article "Are We Losing Possession?" by Benjamin Keller particularly worthwhile. I am glad to see someone as articulate as Mr. Keller defending the principles of good English usage.

My sincere congratulations on a very fine publication.

Senior Technical Editor
Very truly yours,
Robertson Osborne
ELECTRO DATA
Pasadena, California

August 12, 1957

Dear Sir:

The latest copy of PUBLISHERS WEEKLY that of July 1, 1957 to arrive here in Tokyo indicates that some thought is being given to a general revision of U.S. copyright law.

As American publishers abroad we constantly face one particular problem. We cannot offer to American citizens whose books we publish U.S. copyright protection. If we publish a book in English by a non-American Citizen say, a Japanese, he is protected because both Japan and the United States are signatories of the Geneva Universal Copyright Convention.

An American Citizen, however, gets no U.S. copyright at all, unless ad interim is applied for and that automatically limits the number of his books to be imported and sold in the United States to 1500 copies. Further the books must, within a limited time, actually then be printed within the United States or the copyright is lost.

It seems to me that in these days when American communities are settled all over the world that this is a fairly stiff penalty on the American creative writer who may live or wish to publish abroad.

Sincerely,
Charles E. Tuttle
15 Edogawa-cho, Bunkyo-ku
Tokyo, Japan

What do you think about this?—Ed.

WILEY BOOKS

An industry tested presentation of the fundamentals of

TECHNICAL REPORT WRITING

By James W. Souther,
University of Washington

Send for an examination copy today

Public demand has encouraged the publication of this new and comprehensive manual, which appeared originally as a series of magazine articles. It is a short, but thoroughly inclusive presentation of the basic essentials of technical writing, with emphasis on how to write *reports* and how to organize material *functionally*. The book is arranged to correspond to the steps in the writing process. It presents technical report writing as a special problem in design. This approach, understood by the engineer, is adapted to report writing, which is translated into a pattern that the engineer knows and accepts. TECHNICAL REPORT WRITING deals with such factors as form, writing style, and methods and use of illustration. Diagrams and a report-writing check-list provide visual assistance for the writer in the preparation and presentation of his work. This book holds the answers to report writing problems for the engineer, scientist, or technician who is concerned with technical communication. November 1957. Approx. 84 pages. Prob. $2.95.

JOHN WILEY & SONS, Inc., 440 Fourth Avenue New York 16, N. Y.

ROBERT R. RATHBONE (Growth of the Technical Writing Profession) is a professor in the Department of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He delivered this paper at a symposium on "The Technical Writer and the Special Librarian" which was sponsored by the Metals Division, Special Libraries Association, Boston, Massachusetts on May 27, 1957.

FREDERICK T. VanVEEN (How To Be A Purist) is a technical editor with the General Radio Company.

TRACY W. SIMPSON (Notes On Preparation Of Manuscripts Relating To Technical Subjects) is a free-lance technical writer. His principal client for the last three years has been Pacific Switchgear Division of Federal Pacific Electric Company. For the seven preceding years he was technical writer of catalogs, ads, and instruction manuals for a predecessor unit of that company. He is a member of STWE.

WARREN B. BEZANSON (A Timetable For Report Writing) is technical editor in the Research Department Of United Aircraft Corporation, East Hartford, Connecticut.

BOOKS

(Continued from page 22)

GOD'S WORLD AND YOU. O. A. Battista. 229 pages. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing (1957). $3.95.

Dr. Battista has written a popular science book. The book tells in a very interesting way some of the things we now know about the universe we live in, this speck of dust in space (called the planet Earth) on which we live, some of the interesting creatures that cohabit this planet with man, and the human body itself.

If junior or junior miss keeps bothering you with scientific questions Dad, then you should read this book which deals with astronomy, biology, hygiene, geology, and what not, including some misconceptions about bats. This is also just the book to get our youngsters interested in science.

Dr. Battista relates just enough facts to whet the intellectual appetite, and these facts are interesting enough to make you want to search for more. Dozens of photographs are interspersed among the pages, and they appropriately match the text.

R. A. Hanousek

BOOK REVIEWERS:

B. H. WEIL is manager of Information Services in the Research and Engineering Department of the Ethyl Corporation, and editor of the book THE TECHNICAL REPORT.

R. M. STERN is a technical editor and operates Publication Engineering Consultants in New York City.

R. A. HANOUSEK is a technical writer and editor with the General Electric Company, Syracuse, New York.

A NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions to this Journal are always welcome; short articles of 500 to 1000 words are most easily fitted into our small magazine.

Send the original on heavy white bond paper, typewritten, double or triple-spaced, plus two carbons. Leave at least a one-inch margin on all sides, number the pages consecutively, and be sure that all illustrations are keyed in with the text.

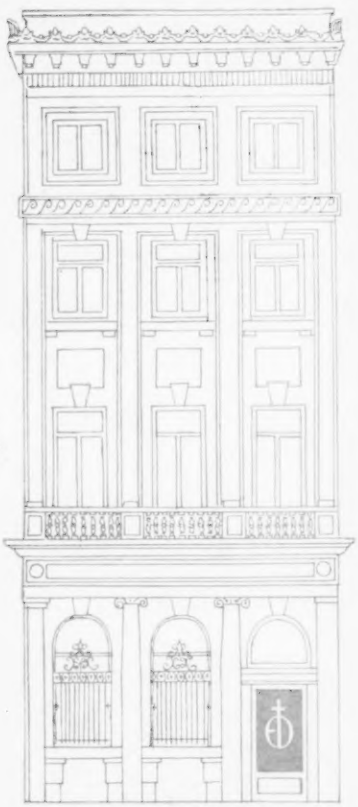
Articles should not exceed 2,500 words plus three illustrations.

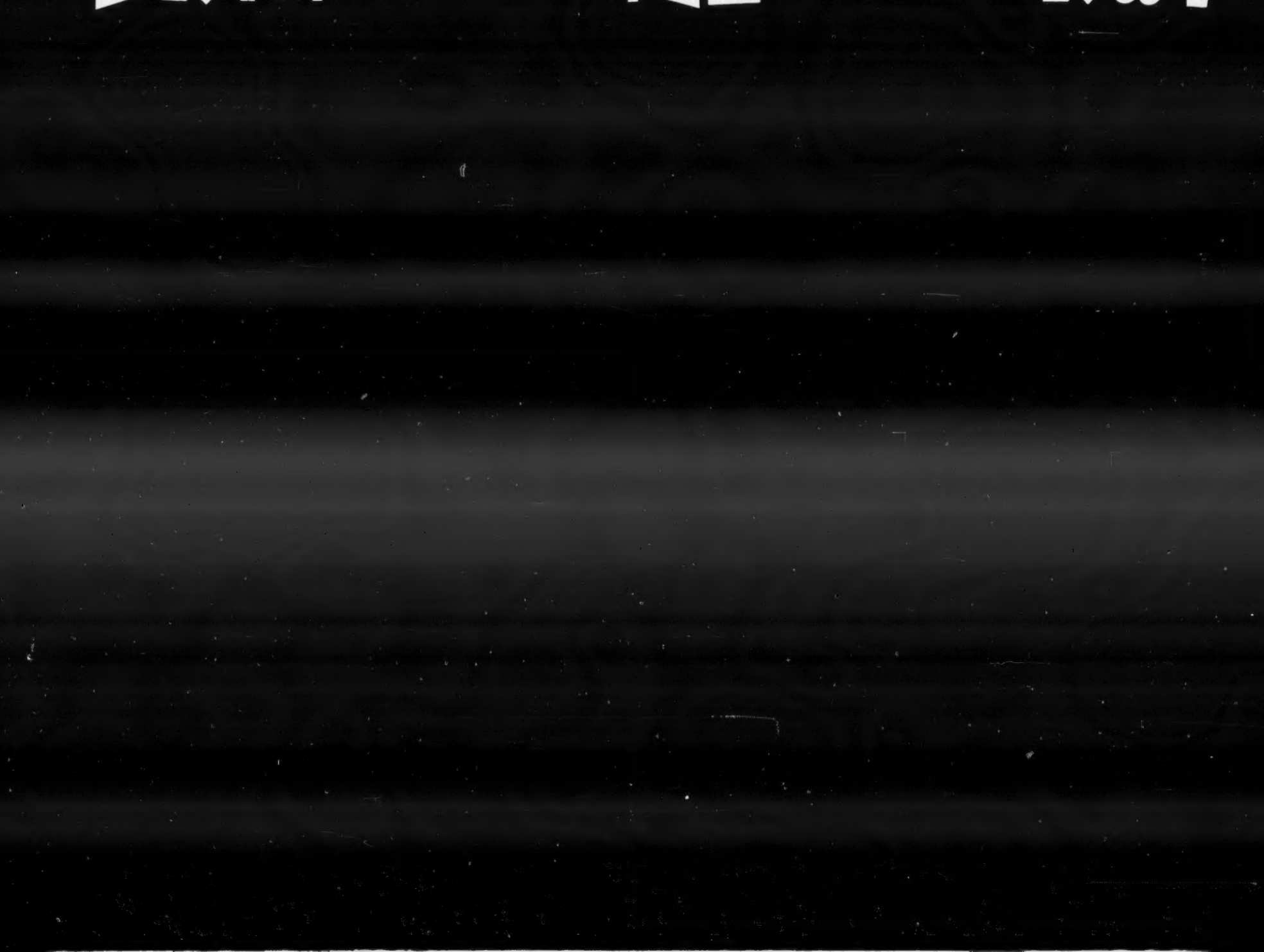
We assume that every article has been approved by your company before it is submitted. The authors' names and affiliations should be on the manuscript. A picture of the author (8 x 10) and a short biographical note are most helpful. This note should include the present title of the author, the full name of his organization and complete information about books, other articles or any other publication credits.

Please address all contributions to the editor; the review committee will read your article and our publication plans will depend on their collective judgment.

EWING TECHNICAL DESIGN, INC.

a single source publication service



Unique, single source service offered by Ewing Technical Design, Inc., allows you to have your complete graphic needs fulfilled at one physical location. ETD, Inc., offers all services needed for the complete production of publications, presentations, charts, slides, and strip films—all under one roof. ■ Facilities for your service include technical writing, art, typing (IBM and DSJ Varitype), photography (color or black and white), typography and printing. Facilities and personnel meet requirements to produce government classified work. ■ If you need a single source graphic service built upon quality and strict adherence to deadlines, wire, write or call. For more information, write for Brochure T-100.

EWING TECHNICAL DESIGN, INC., 1913 ARCH STREET, PHILADELPHIA 3, PENNSYLVANIA, LOcust 7-4430